

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2017 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 24

Fall Update # 3, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Fall Season Assessment

The 2017 fall chum salmon preseason projection is for a run size greater than 1.1 million fish. This level of abundance should be sufficient to provide for escapement, an average subsistence harvest, and a surplus available for commercial and personal use purposes. The estimated fall chum salmon run size through August 6 (based on the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station and the downstream harvest) is estimated to be 648,700 fish, which is above the historical median of 315,000 fish for that date. The first pulse of fall chum salmon entered the Yukon River on July 17 and is expected to be near Steven's Village around August 9, Fort Yukon around August 13, and the Canadian border around August 21. The second pulse of fall chum salmon entered the Yukon River on July 27 and is expected to be near Kaltag on August 8, Galena around August 10, Tanana/Huslia around August 15, Rampart around August 17 and the Canadian border around August 31. A third small pulse entered the Yukon River on August 1 and is expected to be near Holy Cross around August 8, Nulato around August 14, Tanana/Huslia around August 20, Rampart around August 22 and the Canadian border around September 5.

The coho salmon outlook is for an average return. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements of 2013. The majority of the coho salmon run arrives in August and is currently being observed in all of the lower river projects.

Fall Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Fall Drift Test Fishing/ADF&G, YDFDA

The cumulative CPUE for the project through August 6 was 719.34 fall chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 560.73 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing/Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative CPUE for the project through August 6 was 2,127.56 fall chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 812.61 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through August 6 was 471,149, which is above the median passage of approximately 274,433 fish for this date.

Age Composition Fall Season/ADF&G

The preliminary fall chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets indicates the run is dominated by age-4 fish, which is typical. The 2017 preliminary proportion of age-4 and age-5 fish is 73% and 27% respectively compared to the average of 60% age-4 and 38% age-5 fish based on a samples size of 457. Females represent 62% of 469 fish sampled which is above the average is 56%. Preliminary age samples from the commercial test fishery indicate similarly high proportions of age-4 fish at 71% and age-5 fish at 27%.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on chum salmon for the strata from July 19–22 that passed the mainstem sonar, included the first large pulse, contained approximately 62% summer chum and 38% fall chum salmon. The summer chum salmon components contained Lower summer stocks at 25%, Tanana summer at 21%, and middle Yukon stocks at 16%. The fall chum salmon stocks in the sample consisted of 25% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), 12% Canadian and less than 1% Tanana stocks. The second pulse to pass the mainstem Yukon River sonar from July 23 through August 2 contained 27% summer stocks and 73% fall stocks. The fall chum salmon stocks in the samples consisted of 41% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), 23% Canadian and 9% Tanana stocks.

Fall Season Management Strategies

The Coastal District, and Districts 1, 2, and 3, Innoko and Koyukuk rivers, and District 4 subsistence fishing are under fall season management. Subsistence fishing in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C will transition to fall season management on August 7. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5 inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels. Subdistrict 5-D and District 6 will transition to fall season management as the fall chum salmon migration enters those areas.

Summer Assessment

As of August 6, approximately 69,077 Chinook salmon have been counted at the sonar project near Eagle, which is above the historical average of approximately 52,931 fish for this date. Chinook salmon passage also surpassed the upper end of the Interim Management Escapement Goal at the Eagle sonar. Through August 5, approximately 51%, or 35,000 fish, of the Chinook salmon passage at the Eagle sonar were female. On average, about 41% of the passage at the Eagle sonar consists of female Chinook salmon. The 2017 Chinook salmon run surpassed the upper end of the Interim Management Escapement Goal into Canada with sufficient surplus for the Canadian harvest share of the Total Allowable Catch.

Summer Assessment Projects

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station has been fully operational since June 1. As of August 6, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 261,937 fish, which is above the historical average of 211,554 fish for years with early run timing. Preliminary run timing dates suggest the 2017 Chinook salmon run was approximately three days earlier than historical average run timing. A season total of 3,094,350 summer chum salmon were counted at the sonar, which is well above the historical median of 1,875,491 summer chum salmon.

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir operated from June 14 through July 29. The preliminary estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage was 2,970 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 3,946 Chinook salmon. The estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage was 55,532 fish, which is slightly below the historical median of 56,810 fish. The sustainable escapement goals (SEG) are 2,100-4,900 Chinook salmon and greater than 40,000 summer chum past the weir project. Both of these escapement goals have been met.

Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar operated from June 15 through July 26. The preliminary estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage was 415,136 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 441,614. The biological escapement goal (BEG) for summer chum salmon is 350,000–700,000 fish past the sonar project. Summer chum salmon passage exceeded the lower end of the escapement goal on July 14.

Gisasa River Weir / USFWS

The Gisasa River weir operated from June 18 through July 30. Chinook salmon passage, for the season is estimated to be 1,083 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 2,176. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 73,584 fish, which is above the historical median of 44,359 summer chum salmon.

Henshaw Creek Weir / TCC

The Henshaw Creek weir operated from June 26 through July 30. Chinook salmon passage, for the season is estimated to be 677 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 1,146 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 360,068 fish, which is well above the historical median of 144,699 summer chum salmon.

Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower operated from June 26 through August 3. Chinook salmon passage for the season is estimated to be 1,785 fish and summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 15,384 fish. These counts are considered incomplete due to 14 days of missed counts at the project. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 fish past the tower.

Salcha River Tower / ADF&G

The Salcha River tower operated from June 27 through August 4. Chinook salmon passage for the season is estimated to be 3,516 fish and summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 24,033 fish. These counts are considered incomplete due to four days of missed counts at the project. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 3,300–6,500 fish past the tower.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar project began operations on July 1, which is one of the earliest start dates since the project began in 2005. As of August 6, approximately 69,077 Chinook salmon have been counted at the sonar project, which is above the historical cumulative average of 52,931 for this date. The lower end of the Interim Management Escapement Goal for Chinook salmon of 42,500-55,000 was exceeded July 23 and the upper end on July 28.

Age Composition

The age composition of 536 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through July 19 was 8% age-4, 54% age-5, 36% age-6, and 3% age-7 fish. About 53% of the fish sampled were female. Age-5 fish and females were above average, age-6 fish were average, and age-4 fish were below average.

The age composition of 271 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Eagle test fishery through July 20 was 2% age-4, 48% age-5, 49% age-6, and 1% age-7 fish. About 43% of the fish sampled were female. Age-5 fish and females were above average, age-6 fish were average, and age-4 fish were below average.

Current Management

Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula to 1 mile south of Black River, including the communities of Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

District 1 (including the area 1 mile south of Black River north to Point Romanof and waters up to 3 miles offshore, including the communities of Nunam-Iqua, Alakanuk, Emmonak, and Kotlik):

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets, except for closures before, during, and after each commercial fishing period.

District 2:

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets, except for closures before, during, and after each commercial fishing period.

District 3:

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Innoko River:

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Subdistrict 4-A (from $\frac{3}{4}$ mile downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 4A is open on a 5-day per week schedule of 6 p.m. Tuesdays until 6 p.m. Sundays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size set gillnets and fish wheels.

Drift gillnet fishing is open in the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A only (Stink Creek to the tip of Cone Point and includes Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk) for the remainder of the fall season.

Drift gillnets may not exceed 150 feet in length.

Koyukuk River:

Subsistence fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point upstream to the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek, which includes the communities of Galena and Ruby):

Subsistence fishing is open on a 5-day per week schedule of 6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Fridays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size set gillnets and fish wheels.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B and 5-C (from Illinois Creek upstream to regulatory markers two miles downstream of Waldron Creek which includes the communities of Tanana, Rampart, and the Yukon River Bridge area):

Effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 8, subsistence fishing will be open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size set gillnets and fish wheels.

Subdistrict 5-D (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

A fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the following locations: the portion of Subdistrict 5-C from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River, between the western tip of Garnet Island and the Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area) and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border. Subsistence fishermen outside of the permit area are encouraged to fill out their subsistence salmon catch calendars. Calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game office in Fairbanks.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

Kantishna River:

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence fishing is on the regulatory subsistence fishing schedule of 5 days per week from 6 p.m. Fridays until 6 p.m. Wednesdays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Subsistence fishermen are reminded that a subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for salmon in the Tanana River drainage. Permits are available from the ADF&G office in Fairbanks. Subsistence fishermen fishing in the upper portion of Subdistrict 6-B, from three miles upstream of the mouth of Totchaket Slough to Wood River, are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 PM Thursday** each week by contacting the department at **(907) 459-7388**. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Upper Tanana Area (the Tanana River from the confluence with the mouth of Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank upstream to the Tanana River headwaters, including the communities of Healy Lake, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Northway, and the Tok area):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish in the Upper Tanana River Drainage.

Subdistricts 6-C (Personal use fishery from the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Personal use fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

A reminder to fishermen that a personal use salmon fishing permit and a sport fish license are required to fish in Subdistrict 6-C of the Tanana River. Fishermen are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 PM Thursday** each week by contacting the department at **(907) 459-7388**. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Fall Season Commercial Salmon Fishing

In the Lower Yukon, the fall chum salmon commercial fishing season is open in Districts 1, 2, and 3. Fishermen in Districts 1 and 2 should stand by for announcements concerning commercial

periods. All commercial fishermen must make sure they have a buyer before fishing each opening. Commercial fishermen may use gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

In the Upper Yukon, the fall chum salmon commercial fishing season is open in Districts 4 and 5. Fishermen in Subdistricts 4-A, 5-B and 5-C, should standby for announcements concerning commercial periods. All commercial fishermen must make sure they have a buyer before fishing each opening. Commercial fishermen may use fish wheels and gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size. Commercial fishing in District 6 will transition to fall season this week. District 6 commercial fishermen should stand by for fall season commercial salmon fishing announcements.

The sale of incidentally caught Chinook salmon in the fall chum salmon directed commercial fisheries is prohibited. Commercial gillnet fishermen can release live Chinook salmon or use them for subsistence purposes. Chinook salmon retained from commercial gear must be recorded on a fish ticket as retained but not sold.

Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers intending to operate in the Yukon Area must notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

District 1, including the Set Net Only Area:

There are no commercial announcements at this time. Standby for announcements.

Verbal reports from District 1 period #6 commercial opening on August 2 indicate a preliminary harvest of 18,490 fall chum and 887 coho salmon from 215 deliveries. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 2 in District 1 is 145,054 fall chum and 1,873 coho salmon.

District 2:

There are no commercial announcements at this time. Standby for announcements.

Verbal reports from District 2 period #5 commercial opening on August 4 indicate a preliminary harvest of 3,758 fall chum and 137 coho salmon from 60 deliveries. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 4 in District 2 is 38,266 fall chum salmon and 222 coho salmon.

Subdistrict 4-A Commercial (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point including the communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Commercial fishing is open 24-hours a day, seven days a week until 11:59 p.m. August 14. Fishermen may use 6-inch or smaller mesh size set gillnets or fish wheels. Fish wheels do not need to be manned during the fall season commercial fishery. Commercial fishermen should confirm their market before they fish.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 6 in Subdistrict 4-A is 6,577 fall chum salmon.

Summer Season Commercial Fishing

The preliminary commercial harvest in Districts 1, 2, and Subdistrict 4-A is approximately 544,532 summer chum salmon with a reported 4,673 Chinook salmon caught and released alive from dip nets, beach seines and fish wheels, and 5,579 Chinook salmon kept for subsistence use from gillnets.

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon in District 6 opened on July 14 and will close on August 9. As of August 2, approximately 3,896 summer chum salmon have been harvested. To date, 62 Chinook salmon have been released alive and 172 have been kept for subsistence use.

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon is nearly complete for 2017. To date, the preliminary total harvest of summer chum salmon is 548,428 fish.

Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and 6-C (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, Nenana, Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Commercial fishing is open for two 42-hour fishing periods per week on the following schedule with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays, until noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays, until noon Wednesdays**
- **The summer season commercial season will end at noon Wednesday, August 9. District 6 commercial fishermen should stand by for fall season commercial salmon fishing announcements.**

Commercial fishermen should coordinate with the buyer on a daily basis regarding scheduling deliveries. Commercial fish wheels in District 6 are not required to be manned. All salmon harvested during commercial fishing operations must be recorded on a fish ticket at the time of sale. Chinook salmon may not be sold. All Chinook salmon caught but not sold must also be recorded on the fish ticket. Other fish species caught but not sold must also be recorded on the fish ticket. Processors, catcher-sellers, or direct marketers should notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

Fishing schedules, test fish catches and sonar counts are available 24 hours a day at (866) 479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call (907) 459-7387.

If you have any questions, please call ADF&G in Emmonak at (907) 949-1320, the ADF&G office in Fairbanks at (907) 459-7274 or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks at (907) 455-1849.

This is an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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